

Hello everyone!

Here is this week's newsletter.

Bobby

Your Capitol Voice
Representative Bobby Kaufmann

As we begin our fourth week of the legislative session, many topics of interest are making their way through the committee process. This involves subcommittees, testimony from the public, and input from constituents. As bills move through the process you will see many items of controversy not make it. You will also see many bills with merit rise to the level of consideration by the entire legislature. As bills of interest advance, I will write about them. I have had a lot of feedback on the following three issues.

EMS – The brutal weather and dangerous driving conditions have prevented most of the usual EMS visitors from home making the visit to the Capitol. That was not a deterrent, however, for progress on this critical issue. EMS Day on the Hill was last week and I spent time visiting with the leadership of IEMSA (Iowa Emergency Management Systems Association). They shared three important EMS priorities with me. One exciting update I was able to provide them was the creation of the “EMS Caucus” in the Legislature. I chose to organize and create this group because it is easier to get things done in Des Moines when you have a coalition. I am happy to report that membership in the newly formed “EMS Caucus” has reached three-dozen legislators. That is a very powerful number of supporters as we pursue IEMSA goals. The three priorities for them this year are personnel recognition for interstate licensure, a robust and steady funding stream, and training and recruitment. All three of these issues have bills filed with strong support. As they make their way through the legislative process I will keep everyone updated.

Animal Abuse – Last week I was assigned to a subcommittee on a bill that heightens the penalties for animal abusers. Also bill language on the conditions of puppy mills is near completion in my State Government Committee. I want to address a question I was asked the other day. Why are we pursuing legislation for animals when children are still being abused? This is not an either/or. We can tackle both of these issues with vigor, and I will. Legislation with increased penalties for child- abuse, human trafficking, and neglect are making their way through the legislature as well. As Chair of the Oversight Committee, I took the lead on issues to protect children and our citizens.

Secondly, I want to make it clear there are scores of very responsible dog-breeders in Iowa. I have visited their facilities and they do an incredible job of caring for their animals. If I were a responsible dog-breeder, I would JOIN me in my fight to stop irresponsible dog breeders because they give the good ones a bad name. You have all seen the reports of puppies found in condition so heinous it's unbelievable. I have said it before and I will repeat it today – I strongly believe that anyone who has the mental predisposition to torture puppies and kittens will likely graduate to abusing people. Finally, I am a proud livestock farmer and member of the ag community. These bills do not impact Iowa Agriculture in any way.

Medical Cannabis – As promised I have filed two bills to expand our medical cannabis program in Iowa. I will write about this in detail in a future column, but I want to let everyone that progress has begun. Too many people that could benefit from this medicine do not have access to it.

Listening Posts Schedule (February 16)
10 AM-Mechanicsville Public Library
1 PM-West Branch Fire Station

Capitol visitors: Pat Hocking, Superintendent of Lisbon School; Mark Dohmen, Superintendent of North Cedar Schools; Mike Carberry, Iowa City; Jerry Ewers, Muscatine.

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